The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor, concerning its the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

WHOLE NO. 1599 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1941 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 31, NO. 48

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FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Because business as well as labor protested, Congress has definitely abandoned the idea of compulsory arbitration and is now tinkering with various sorts of "cooling-off" proposals as a preventative of defense strikes.

Experience has proved that mandatory "cooling-off" periods are a nostrum. They do not cure strike epidemics. They do not even provide as much relief as an aspirin for a headache.

Let us see how this quack medicine works out in practice. Three states—Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin—have "cooling-off" legislation on their statute books. Yet we venture to guess that the proportion of strikes in these three states over the past two years has been greater than the average of the rest of the country.

As a recent newspaper survey disclosed, the "cooling-off" provision serves only to heat things up. For instance, if a contract between management and labor in a plant is about to expire, the ordinary course of procedure is to open peaceful negotiations for its renewal with the usual debate over demands for improvements and conditions. The issues are talked over, there is give and take by both sides and, normally, a new contract is drawn up and signed without too much trouble and, certainly, without any strife. Both sides wish to preserve friendly contractual relations.

Cloudy and Warmer

But when the picture is clouded by mandatory "cooling-off" legislation, a new and threatening element intervenes. The union, fearing the loss of bargaining power because it cannot strike without notice, flies intention of calling a strike at least thirty days before the expiration of the contract just to be on the safe side. Thus, the negotiations are begun in an atmosphere of hostility. More often than not, this hostility crystallizes into bitterness and the strike actually eventuates, instead of a new agreement.

Is that what Congress wants to see happen on a national scale? Is that going to help the defense program? Is that going to assure smooth and uninterrupted production?

The American Federation of Labor is convinced that a Federal "cooling-off" law will incite trouble instead of preventing it. We consider such legislation dangerous and harmful to the defense program. We urge Congress to reject it, not only for the sake of labor, but for the national interest.

The trouble is that many members of Congress have made up their minds that "there ought to be a law" and they don't know what kind of a law will work. Neither does anyone else. This doesn't imply widespread ignorance of the problem. It merely proves that no law in and of itself will cure the basic trouble.

As we have said repeatedly in the past, no law can force a man to work against his will. The best means to assure the elimination of defense strikes is to establish fair and equitable conditions in industry so that labor will have no cause to strike.

Old Man of the Sea

More and more, as the debate in Congress continues, it becomes clear that the purpose behind the pending anti-strike legislation is punitive and that in order to punish one man—John L. Lewis—the lawmakers are preparing to destroy the freedom of all workers.

Thus we read Rep. Robert Ramspeck, a life-long friend of labor who is now sponsoring an anti-strike bill, quoted as saying in self-justification:

"I came to the conclusion that the time had come to find out whether the Government is run by the duly elected representatives of the people, or by John L. Lewis."

And again, Rep. Francis E. Walter says:

"If it had not been for one man, and one man alone, John Lewis, we wouldn't be considering the legislation."

These are not the Smiths, the Hoffmans and the Coxes talking. These are the words of legislators who are regarded as temperate in their point of view on this question.

Because of the excesses of one man, labor is now threatened with the loss of its rights. It seems to us that it is up to labor to do something about such a ridiculous situation. It is the duty of the CIO—not Congress—to punish Mr. Lewis. Let them take him out on his own and isolate in the ranks of the CIO it has now become evident that Lewis is a complete liability to labor. The CIO cannot escape responsibility on its back for the sins of one man of the era. For self-preservation it must repudiate and get rid of him.

As for the AFL, it is up to us to let Congress know that we do not intend to be made a goat for the sins of a man who has done his utmost to destroy our organization and jeopardize all of labor.

Labor Triumphs As House Defeats Wage-Freezing In Price Control Bill

Washington, D. C.—Vigorous action by the American Federation of Labor resulted in a vital and significant victory for America's workers when the House of Representatives, by a decisive vote, defeated attempts to freeze wages through the medium of the price control bill.

The House adopted the bill by a vote of 224 to 161 after all references to imposing wage ceilings had been expunged. As adopted, the measure sets up a five-man board to "stabilize and control" prices and commodities during the national emergency.

"The measure now goes to the Senate where there is a disposition to defeat price action until after New Year's.

The American Federation of Labor supported the price control bill as a step to prevent inflation and further increases in the cost of living which hurt workers more than anyone else.

However, the AFL was forced to fight desperately to circumvent attempts by enemies of labor to insert wage ceilings in the bill.

This fight will have to be renewed in the Senate where further attempts to hamstring labor may be expected. However, the overwhelming defeat of anti-labor forces in the House on this issue indicates clearly that a final victory for the workers is assured.

One of the most reprehensible features of the drive to freeze wages ceilings was the argument made by the sponsors of such action that labor should be prohibited from striking even in defense industries. The fact that more than 99 per cent of American workers have not participated in defense strikes but have given the highest type of service day-in and day-out was, as usual, ignored by labor's enemies.

The vote on wage freezing was a significant test of labor's strength in Congress and proved once more that when labor unites on a major issue the lawmakers in Congress can see the light.

Labor And Capital Must Join Hands For Defense, Green Tells Bankers

Hollywood, Fla.—Five million members of the American Federation of Labor are pledged themselves to aid the government in the successful completion of the national defense program, William Green, president of the Federation, told members of the Investment Bankers Association of America at the opening of its annual convention here.

"We are Americans first and members of our union second," he declared.

Emphasizing throughout his address, which was broadcast over a nation-wide network of the CBS radio system, the stake which labor and capital have in the preservation of our democratic principles, Mr. Green called for a united stand of capital, labor management and labor in support of the defense program.

The labor leader stressed the urgent need for preparatory steps to be taken now to cushion the tremendous and inevitable shock to our economic system which a war effort would follow the present emergency.

"No doubt the principle of free enterprise and private ownership in all free, democratic countries throughout the world will be called upon to meet a most severe test," he said.

To prepare for the absorption of millions of workers now engaged in defense industries, as well as the release of those in actual military service, Mr. Green announced that a survey be made and plans prepared for a huge public works program.

"All of this will call for the expenditure of large sums of money," he said. "All of this character of planning should be formulated and made ready so that the economic needs of the nation should be met in as large a way as possible. It will be far better for the nation to provide employment for the millions who will be forced out of defense production industries rather than to supply relief to unemployed and those dependent upon them as we were forced to do during the previous periods of economic distress."

Mr. Green warned that labor would suffer as much, if not more, than capital should some form of communism, fascism or nazism supplant our present economic system, and added:

"The chief menace to the preservation of free enterprise within a democracy is when destructive economic changes take place. Long distressing periods of unemployment which cause widespread poverty and human distress, heavy losses of investments, destitution and forced liquidation of valuable assets tend to destroy public confidence in our so-called capitalistic system.

"Regardless of how capital and labor, employer and employe, management and worker may disagree upon other economic, social and political questions, they stand united in defense of the maintenance of free enterprise and the preservation of the joint benefits which flow therefrom."

Woll and CIO Group Make Joint Plea For Labor Peace To Aid U. S. Defense

New York City.—Matthew Woll, vice president of the American Federation of Labor, joined with officers of Sidney Hillman's dissident Clothing Workers in calling for immediate steps to reunite the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O.

The occasion was the presentation by the New York joint board of the Amalgamated of a check for $10,000 representing the final installment in a contribution by the union of $50,000 to the American Labor Committee to Aid British Labor, of which Mr. Woll is chairman. William Green, president of the A. F. of L., is honorary chairman of the committee, and most of the principal officers are leaders of A. F. of L. unions.

Special interest attached to the calls for peace in labor's ranks because the C. I. O. convention in Detroit last week adjourned without any direct response to President Roosevelt's plea for the re-establishment of labor unity as "a patriotic duty and a contribution of real value in the creation of true national unity." The A. F. of L. convention meeting in Seattle last month had informed the President that it was prepared to resume peace talks with the C. I. O. at any time.

Representatives of 40,000 C. I. O. clothing workers in the metropolitan area applauded Mr. Woll's declaration that he hoped it would not be long before the A. F. of L. and C. I. O. went forward under a single banner. He expressed confidence that the movement of both wings of organized labor on the necessity for supporting President Roosevelt's program of all-out aid to the nations fighting Hitler would lend a powerful lever for unity.

The A. F. of L. vice president praised the record of Mr. Hillman, who became a leader of sweatshop workers past as president of the Amalgamated to become associate director of the Office of Production Management.

Mr. Woll said that Mr. Hillman as a C. I. O. leader, had always tried to end the breach with the A. F. of L. and that, as a government official, he had continued to promote labor harmony by "refusing to enter into a campaign of aggression and destruction against the A. F. of L. building crafts."

Continuation of jurisdictional rivalry between A. F. of L. and C. I. O. unions would inevitably give rise to "a patriotic duty and a contribution of real value in the creation of true national unity." The A. F. of L. convention meeting in Seattle last month had informed the President that it was prepared to resume peace talks with the C. I. O. at any time.

Three vice presidents of the Amalgamated echoed the A. F. of L. leader's plea for labor peace. They were Joseph Hollander and Joseph Catalanotti, comanagers of the New York joint board, and Abraham Miller, the union's secretary-treasurer.

Green To Serve As Labor Co-Chairman In F. D. R. Birthday Celebration Drive

Washington, D. C.—On Jan. 30 President Roosevelt will be sixty years old. In accordance with custom, the President's birthday will be celebrated throughout the land in conjunction with a drive to raise funds to wipe out the scourge of infantile paralysis.

This annual birthday will be the Diamond Jubilee celebration and President William Green announced that the American Federation of Labor will take full part. Eager to serve, Mr. Green disclosed his acceptance of the post as co-chairman of the Labor Division of the Committee for the Celebration of the President's Birthday in the following letter:

Mr. Keith Morgan, National Chairman,
The Committee for the Celebration
of the President's Birthday for the
National Foundation of Infantile Paralysis, Inc.,
50 East 42nd Street, New York City.
Dr. Mr. Morgan:

I respond with a feeling of sincere pleasure to the invitation you extend me in your letter of recent date to become a member of the National Committee and Chairman of the National Labor Committee of the Committee for the Celebration of the President's Birthday for the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, Inc.

I will regard it as a distinct honor to serve as co-chairman of your National Labor Committee. I know of the tremendous importance and significance which will be attached to the President's 60th birthday on January 30th. This, as you have pointed out, will be declared to be the President's Diamond Jubilee Birthday Celebration. Truly all people in all walks of life will participate in this historic celebration. Because of my deep interest in the work of the Committee of which you are the National Chairman, I will gladly serve and help in the furtherance of your plans and of all your work to the full extent of my ability.

With all good wishes, I beg to remain,
Very truly yours,
(Signed) WILLIAM GREEN, *President,*
American Federation of Labor.

Eighteen of Denny Lewis Raid Gang Convicted By Jury of Conspiracy

Minneapolis, Minn.—Eighteen members of the group whose leaders were convicted recently of conspiring with the CIO to make war upon the AFL International Brotherhood of Teamsters were found guilty by a jury in Federal Court here of conspiracy to create insubordination in the armed forces of the Government.

The prescribed penalty for this offense is ten years in prison, but the jury recommended leniency.

The defendants, identified with the Socialist Workers Party, were acquitted of charges of conspiracy to overthrow the Government. Five other defendants were acquitted on both counts.

Heading the list of those convicted was V. R. Dunne, one of three notorious brothers who led the ineffectual CIO raid on the Teamsters. Another brother committed suicide recently. The third was among those convicted.

Others who were found guilty included: Harry DeBoer, Carlos Hudeld, Max Gelman, Farrell Dobbs and Carl Kuehn.

The convictions unquestionably will wreck the last vestiges of the CIO attempts to raid the membership of the Teamsters Union. Denny Lewis has been severely criticized by CIO as well as AFL spokesmen for his association with revolutionists in the indefensible attack on the Minneapolis organization of the Teamsters.

RAIL COMPROMISE PREVENTS STRIKE, INCREASES WAGES

Operating and Non-Operating Employes Get Permanent Pay Boosts

Washington, D. C.—A threatened nation-wide railway strike of 1,200,000 workers was averted by agreement on a compromise wage increase which will mean a pay boost of over $325,000,000 a year. A basic rise of 10 cents an hour is provided for non-operating employes and 9½ cents an hour for operating employes.

The compromise was announced by Wayne L. Morse, chairman of President Roosevelt's Emergency Fact-Finding Board, after nearly thirty-hour hours of virtually continuous mediation conferences with representatives of rail management and labor.

The compromise provides for the following increases:

Non-Operating Employes—An increase of 9 cents an hour, as originally recommended by the Fact-Finding Board, to be in effect from Sept. 1 to Dec. 1, with an increase to 10 cents an hour thereafter.

Operating Employes—An increase of 7½ per cent, as recommended by the Fact-Finding Board, from Sept. 1 to Dec. 1, and thereafter an increase of 9½ cents an hour.

Both increases will be added to the basic rates of pay and will be in effect temporary, as the board previously had recommended. The board's original recommendations had been rejected by labor spokesmen both because they were inadequate and because they would have expired automatically Dec. 31, 1942.

On the question of vacations with pay for nonoperating workers, the compromise provided that office, clerical and telegraphic employes should receive paid vacations of six, nine or twelve days, respectively for one, two and three years service, and all other nonoperating employes would receive six-day vacations. On board originally recommended that all receive six-day vacations.

Spokesmen for both groups estimated that the compromise wage increase would total more than $300,000,000 to $325,000,000 to the carriers' annual wage bill. The cost of the board's vacation recommendations had been estimated by the board at about $270,000,000.

D. OF C. UNION HEADS HIT ANTI-LABOR LAWS

Washington, D. C.—Officials of local A. F. of L. unions took steps to prevent the adoption of restrictive labor legislation and present labor's case to the public in a more favorable light.

Specific programs of action were adopted more than 300 trade union officials attending a special meeting of the Central Labor Union, held unofficially by the group include the following:

1. To ask members of the national A. F. of L. unions to send a telegram to call a meeting in Washington of the presidents of all national unions to discuss labor's part in the defense program.

2. To prepare a plan to combat anti-labor legislation.

3. To appoint a special publicity committee "to create sympathetic understanding" of labor's position with the public.

4. To appoint a special committee to study editorials in all Washington newspapers to prepare a special report on editorials which attack the A. F. of L. or propose anti-labor legislation. This report is to be presented at the central body's next meeting, December 15, along with a plan to counteract the objectionable editorials.

Frank J. Coleman, recording secretary, speaking in behalf of the resolution, asserted, "The same organized group interested in curbing labor for years is behind the anti-labor bills now before Congress."

Coleman called a "troll" of anti-labor Congressmen and singled out for special condemnation Representative Howard W. Smith (Democrat) of Alexandria, Va.

CORSON NAMED TO HEAD SOCIAL SECURITY BUREAU

Washington, D. C.—Federal Security Administrator Paul V. McNutt announced that John J. Corson, now Director of the Bureau of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance of the Social Security Board, has been appointed Director of the Bureau of Employment Security, and will be responsible for the operation of the United States Employment Service, which is charged given broader functions as a result of the defense program.

Mr. McNutt also appointed Director of the Bureau of Employment Security Clarence Q. Berdahl, New York attorney; James P. Cannon, New York, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party; Mrs. Grace Carlson, State organizer; Felix Morrow, New York editor of New Militant, official party organ; and Albert Coover, Alfred Russell, Oscar Schoenfeld, Max Gelman, Farrell Dobbs and Carl Kuehn.

The convictions unquestionably will wreck the last vestiges of the CIO attempts to raid the membership of the Teamsters Union. Denny Lewis has been severely criticized by CIO as well as AFL spokesmen for his association with revolutionists in the indefensible attack on the Minneapolis organization of the Teamsters.

Green Launches Nation-Wide Drive To Defeat Anti-Strike Legislation

Calls On Members of Congress To Vote Against Pending Bills and Asks All AFL Affiliates To Join In Campaign

Washington, D. C.—President William Green of the American Federation of Labor appealed to each member of Congress to vote against pending anti-strike legislation.

In letters to the Senators and Representatives, Mr. Green vigorously protested against any attempt to penalize millions of workers whose services have measured up to the highest Government requirements. He warned that enactment of anti-labor legislation would only serve to cause widespread resentment among workers who have cooperated fully in the defense program.

At the same time, Mr. Green sent letters to all State Federations of Labor, city central bodies and to 106 affiliated national and international unions comprising 60,000 local unions, urging them to rally their forces for the defeat of anti-labor bills.

Write or Wire To Congress—Act Now! Or Labor's Freedom May Be Lost

Washington, D. C.—Every American Federation of Labor member in the nation should heed President Green's plea to write or telegraph to his Senators and Congressman, urging them to vote against pending anti-strike legislation.

Immediate action is threatened in both Houses of Congress on this legislation. The specific bills are too numerous to mention but each one of them has the same objective—to deprive workers of their basic right to strike.

The only strikeless nations in the world today are those controlled by Nazi, Fascist or Communist Governments. Is America going to follow their example?

The right to strike is as fundamental as any other American freedom guaranteed by the Constitution. Is America going to destroy our freedom at home to preserve the freedom of others in foreign lands?

Write or wire your Senators and Congressman at once protesting against such fatal folly. Tell them the truth—that the members of the AFL are just as anxious to avoid strikes in the defense program as anyone else, even more so, but will fight to the finish against being robbed of the right to strike.

Abraham Lincoln uttered words of wisdom in his message to Congress in 1861 when he said:

"I hid the laboring people beware of surrendering the power which they possess, and which, if surrendered, will surely be used to shut off the door to further advancement for such as they and fix new disabilities and burdens upon them until all of liberty shall be lost."

The text of Mr. Green's letter to the members of Congress follows:

"The membership of the American Federation of Labor has cooperated fully and completely with our government in the advancement of the national defense program. The value of the services rendered by the membership of the American Federation of Labor is in evidence on every hand. Cantonments, buildings, and naval construction programs have been carried forward until much of it has been completed ahead of schedule. No strikes of any kind in defense industries was adopted by the American Federation of Labor. That represents our official attitude toward uninterrupted defense production.

"The number of man hours lost as a result of strikes by members of the American Federation of Labor is inconsequential. The record made is equal to that made by labor in our beloved country during the world war.

"Some people have a very false idea that jurisdictional disputes cause great loss of time in industry. Actually this is far from true. Labor Department figures show that of all the workers involved in strikes settled in the first half of 1941, only 2.3 per cent were involved in jurisdictional strikes or disputes due to rival unions. If we try to calculate the time lost by jurisdictional strikes, we find it microscopic—less than one hundredth of one per cent of time worked!

"Now take our experience in America and compare it with England. England is at war. Yet strikes still occur in England. We know that nowhere in the world is there such an example of what free workers can produce under the most grueling conditions of bombardment and destruction. I do not need to enlarge upon the courage, the stamina and the unquenchable patriotism of the workers of England. The world has marvelled. It is the spirit of free men who give their all because they have real freedom.

"Yet, I repeat, strikes have occurred in England right through the war and up to the present day. In August 1941 we read of 98 strikes involving 224,000 workers. In September 1941 we read of 348 strikes and in May 1941, 224,000 English workers went on strike to redress wrongs or win their rights. And the world knows no more splendid record of production than that of the British in this war.

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"How does our strike record compare with that of England? In 1940, the strike record of England, Canada, and the United States is almost exactly the same. Both in 1940 England and Canada were at war. In 1941 both of these countries slightly more than 2 per cent of the workers were out on strike at some time during the year. The figures are quite closely alike: England, 2.3 per cent; Canada, 2.4 per cent; United States 2.3 per cent.

"Notwithstanding this fine record and these facts, reports indicate that Congress is about to penalize these honest, skilled, sincere American Federation of Labor workers through the enactment of anti-labor legislation. It seems inconceivable that Congress would take such action. Imagine, if you please, the state of mind which will be created among these loyal, devoted workers identified with the American Federation of Labor when they realize they have become the victims of anti-labor legislation! Why should Congress wish to penalize millions of workers whose services have measured up to the highest government requirements because of the indefensible acts of some irresponsible leaders of a labor organization unaffiliated with the American Federation of Labor?

"The remedy for the cause which it is alleged underlies the action contemplated by Congress, cannot be found through the enactment of anti-labor legislation. Available remedies should be applied rather than to seek a new one through the enactment of anti-labor legislation.

"In behalf of and in the name of the millions of men and women identified with the American Federation of Labor, I vigorously protest against the enactment of anti-labor and anti-strike legislation of any kind. The enactment of such legislation will create widespread resentment among the membership of the American Federation of Labor and all their friends. I, therefore, earnestly appeal to you to vote against the enactment of proposed anti-labor legislation into law."

Hatters Union Entirely Innocent Of Anti-Trust Charges, Zaritsky Says

New York, N. Y.—Max Zaritsky, president of the United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers International Union, declared the union entirely innocent of anti-trust charges under which a Federal Grand Jury in Philadelphia indicted four of its locals and six officials, as well as thirty-one hat manufacturers.

"There has been a conspiracy, as the government charges," said Mr. Zaritsky, "but instead of being a conspiracy on the part of the union, it has been a conspiracy on the part of certain manufacturers who have combined to re-establish in the cap industry sweatshop conditions which our international has overcome. One of the most respected in the American labor movement, has succeeded in organizing as a result of thirty-five years' effort.

"These manufacturers have apparently succeeded in enlisting the support of some government officials who have repeatedly shown their hostility toward labor organizations, and who resented the progress we made to provide a living and decent wage for the workers employed in the cap industry.

"Their resentment is directed specifically to a wage determination made by the Secretary of Labor some years ago under the provisions of the Walsh-Healey Act. That determination specified that the minimum wage for experienced cap makers shall be 67½ cents an hour. Some manufacturers and some War Department officials considered that wage excessive.

"In order to evade this requirement, made in accordance with law, some manufacturers were making bids on quantities that would bring the total amount of the bid under $10,000 since the Walsh-Healey Act does not apply to contracts of less than $10,000."

MILWAUKEE CO-OP SIGNS AFL UNION AGREEMENTS

Milwaukee, Wis.—Contracts carrying pay raises have been signed between the Greendale Co-operative and AFL unions representing the meat cutters, grocery clerks and garage men, with all of the co-operatives covered.

Ornburn Urges Protests To Congress Against Measures Shackling Labor

Washington, D. C.—Assailing anti-strike legislation, I. M. Ornburn, Secretary-Treasurer of the Union Label Trades Department, called on all trade unionists to protest against three measures to their Senators and Congressmen. In a nationally broadcast speech, he said:

"There are now many proposed bills before Congress which provide for the shackling of American workers through so-called anti-strike laws and there are other proposals to freeze wages. All these bills would establish conditions like those in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. It is un-American and a complete surrender of labor's hard-won rights, either individually or collectively. These measures are illegal according to our present laws and invalid according to the United States Constitution which protects citizens against involuntary servitude or slavery.

"The same people who, just a few years ago, were vociferously asking us to defend the Constitution are now doing everything within their power to destroy the rights of citizens under that same United States Constitution.

"Now, I am going to make an important appeal to all citizens who believe in the constitutional rights of all American workers. I ask you to immediately write to your two United States Senators, from your own State, and to your Congressman, from your own District, all of whom are now in Washington, D. C., and urge them to vote against all proposed anti-labor union bills. Please inform your servants in Congress that workers have votes more than a few unfair employers and cheap politicians who are advocating this drastic legislation. It will be a powerful negative form of government, known as a referendum, and you have a perfect right to petition your representatives. Tell them that you are keeping a close tab on their records. Let them know that if they vote to enslave American workers that on the next election day you will vote to keep them at home. If your members of Congress vote for laws that will shackle labor, replace them with men who will uphold American freedom and democracy."